

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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### NATION'S NEWEST NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

The newest addition to the National Wildlife Refuge System is 10,000 acres of nesting and migration habitat for waterfowl in western Minnesota.

On May 21, title for Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge was transferred to Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The land has been purchased over the past six years by the Corps for downstream flood protection with the understanding that, following construction of an earthen dam and other water level controls, administrative responsibility would be turned over to the Fish and Wildlife Service. The refuge is the 367th in the national system and brings the total refuge lands to approximately 32,000,000 acres. The land was part of the Big Stone Lake and Whetstone River Project in Big Stone and Lac qui Parle Counties, Minnesota.

The Service is now responsible for managing the refuge's wildlife resources and related wildlife-oriented recreation. A self-guided auto tour through the refuge, designed by the Fish and Wildlife Service, is being constructed with assistance from the Corps of Engineers.

Big Stone Refuge borders the Upper Minnesota River, a major corridor for migratory birds that present a natural spectacle in the fall when scores of species funnel into the Mississippi Valley from Canada. The refuge is another link in the chain of vital habitat that is threatened by encroaching agricultural and industrial development.